

Business Success STORY

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INSPIRING THE BUSINESS COMMUNITY...

Most Influential
**Manufacturing
LEADERS**
to Watch in 2025

SPOTLIGHT

Efficient Output
Comprehending the Role
of Production Strategy
Experts in Redefining the
Manufacturing
Productivity with
Innovative Practices

ARTICLE

Right Practices

Understanding the Evolution
of the Smart Factory Concept
and how is it Enhancing
the Productivity in the
Industries Today

**Gaurav
BAWA**

Orchestrating the Future of
Indian Manufacturing



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Most Influential
Manufacturing
LEADERS
to Watch in 2025



A Modern League of Manufacturing Influencers

In 2025, the manufacturing industry is at a unique point in time: we have global pandemic-experienced labor shortages, unrivalled customization and supply chain complexity, and we can all extra-territorially oriented. The leaders that are driving, affecting, and shaping change for the future of the industry are not factory managers, and they are not master craftsmen - they are maneuvering all over the world as they blend challenge with opportunity in arriving at a muddled destination. This, is the new era of competition in a resilient, smarter, and digitalized production future. These are the visionaries who know that the future of manufacturing is less about physical assembly but more about smart systems and agile strategy.

One of the central themes among these powerful leaders is the unabating quest for operational perfection by embracing automation. They are leading the charge on integrating top-level robotics, process optimization using AI, and predictive maintenance. It's not about saving money here; it's about building a hyper-efficient environment that reduces waste and increases output. They are responsible for "lights-out" manufacturing, wherein factories can run with minimal human involvement, with non-stop production and uniform quality.

The second characteristic that defines these most observed leaders is their adherence to sustainable and responsible production. Most watched leaders are those who have managed to integrate the paradigm of circular economy into their operations. They are at the forefront of utilizing green materials, producing zero-waste production processes, and redesigning supply chains to reduce their carbon footprint. They push the boundaries beyond the plant floor as they campaign for corporate social responsibility and set new industry standards for taking care of the planet.

And finally, the most effective leaders are advocates in case of workforce transformation. They are cognizant of the fact that while technology is restructuring the industry, it is the human element that matters most. They are investing heavily in upskilling and reskilling their workforce to get them ready for work that includes coding, data analysis, and robotic management. By fostering a culture of innovation and continuous learning they are embracing a workforce which is also adapting to their technology creating a composite unit that will reflect the future of manufacturing. They are the 'Most Influential Manufacturing Leaders to Watch in 2025,' of Business Success Story, who are not only producing products but are also building a smarter, better and greener industry for all.



- Gaurav Wankhade

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Gaurav Bawa, Senior Vice President – India Group, and Managing Director	Wika India	Gaurav Bawa serves as the Senior Vice President – India Group, and Managing Director, at WIKA India, a globally renowned manufacturer and market leader in pressure and temperature measurement.
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Raj Dugar, Director	PL Engineering Limited	Raj Dugar is based out of Mumbai, Maharashtra and is serving as a Director and Board Member of PL Engineering Limited.
Roshini R, CRD Head	Besten Engineers and Consultants India Pvt Ltd	Roshini R, based in Chennai, is currently a CRD Head at Besten Engineers and Consultants India.
Srinivasan Namala, CEO and Board of Director	Porus Laboratories Pvt Ltd	Srinivasan is the CEO and Board of Director of Porus Laboratories Pvt Ltd, which is engaged in the manufacturing of Bulk drugs and Speciality chemicals primarily for the US market.
Subodh Goel, Managing Director	Civitech Developers Pvt Ltd	Subodh Goel, Founder, Civitech Group, is an engineer by qualification and a businessman by choice.

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Gaurav

BAWA

Orchestrating the Future of Indian Manufacturing

“My journey has been shaped by a strong foundation in education and early exposure to structured systems.”

C O V E R S T O R Y

A full-page portrait of Gaurav Bawa, a middle-aged man with glasses, wearing a light blue button-down shirt under a dark blue textured blazer and dark trousers. He is standing with his right hand resting on the back of a black office chair and his left hand in his pocket. The background is a light blue wall with a subtle grid pattern. A thin, curved line with two dark blue dots at its ends arches over his head.

Gaurav Bawa
Senior Vice President
and Managing Director,
WIKAI India (A subsidiary
of Wika Group)

WIKAI

The Indian manufacturing sector is a dynamic one. Dynamism in it arises from a powerful interplay of factors that are fast transforming its geography and driving it into the international arena.

This intrinsic dynamism is not static but a continuing transformation. It is fueled by many factors: Visionary government programs, an increasingly rapid adoption of advanced technologies, a growing domestic market, a deliberately chosen placement in changing global supply chains, and an extraordinary league of some of the most influential manufacturing leaders, like **Gaurav Bawa, Senior Vice President and Managing Director – India of Wika India** (an Indian subsidiary of globally renowned **Wika Group**).

Powering this dynamism, Gaurav embodies the strategic acumen and forward-thinking vision required to thrive in a highly competitive and evolving industrial landscape.

The Genesis of a Leader: Education and Early Influences

Gaurav's distinguished career path is rooted in a robust educational foundation and early exposure to highly structured operational systems. His academic journey began with engineering studies at Birla College in Gujarat, a crucial step in building his technical acumen. This was followed by an MBA from the renowned IMT Ghaziabad, which provided him with a strategic business perspective.

It was in his formative professional experiences that the bedrock of his leadership philosophy was truly laid. *"My time at Eicher Motors introduced me to Total Quality*

Management," Gaurav reflects, highlighting the early emphasis on continuous improvement and customer satisfaction.

Subsequently, his tenure at GE proved pivotal in refining his expertise. *"My experience at GE developed my understanding of Six Sigma and global operational excellence,"* he explains, referring to the data-driven methodology for eliminating defects and improving processes.

These foundational influences were transformative. *"These early influences deepened my interest in execution, strategy, and team building,"* he elaborates, *"which became core to my professional direction and growth into leadership roles."* This blend of academic rigor and practical exposure to world-class operational frameworks provided him with the unique insights necessary to steer complex manufacturing operations.

A Career Forged in Excellence and Strategic Growth

Today, Gaurav's journey through the electrical and electronic manufacturing industry is marked by a demonstrated history of leadership and a relentless pursuit of business development.

As an experienced **Managing Director**, he has refined his expertise in critical areas, such as **Lean Six Sigma and Quality Management** – disciplines essential for optimizing efficiency and achieving world-class standards in manufacturing.

Currently, Gaurav is singularly responsible for the overarching business results of WIKI India, overseeing four manufacturing plants and extensive operations across the nation. His leadership is not just about managing existing structures but about orchestrating growth and ensuring operational excellence that aligns with global benchmarks.

Pillars of Success: Direction, Agility, and Discipline

In today's relentlessly fast-paced business environment, Gaurav identifies a critical triad of qualities essential for success: *"a clear direction, the agility to adapt, and the discipline to execute consistently."* For him, these are not mere aspirations but operational imperatives. He emphasizes that achieving this trifecta demands **'strategic thinking, accountability, and timely decision-making.'**

Beyond tactical execution, Gaurav places immense value on human capital. *"Equally critical is identifying and developing*

Success in today's fast-paced world relies on having a clear direction, the agility to adapt, and the discipline to execute consistently.





Balancing leadership and personal life begins with setting clear priorities and respecting boundaries.



talent across all levels,” he asserts, underlining a people-first approach. This commitment to nurturing talent is, in turn, buttressed by unwavering ethical principles: “supported by integrity, inclusiveness, and a sustained commitment to continuous learning.” He firmly believes that these virtues are indispensable in a leader.

“Together, these qualities equip leaders to navigate change while delivering consistent, long-term impact,” Gaurav adds. His philosophy underscores that while technical proficiency is vital, true leadership lies in the ability to inspire, empower, and adapt, ensuring both immediate performance and enduring legacy in an ever-transforming industry.

Transforming Challenges into Opportunities: The Cross-Border Transfer

As a leader, Gaurav has encountered significant challenges, none more illustrative of his problem-solving acumen than the complex task of managing a plant transfer from France to India. This critical undertaking presented multiple hurdles, including **‘tight deadlines, varied working styles, and complex coordination’** across international teams over which he lacked direct control.

His approach to this formidable challenge was characterized by strategic clarity and collaborative empowerment. “I

addressed this by setting clear goals, encouraging collaboration, and staying focused on timelines,” Gaurav explains.

This disciplined execution, despite geographical and cultural distances, proved instrumental. The result was a successful transition: *“This helped complete the transfer smoothly and strengthened my ability to handle cross-border operations.”*

This experience not only showcased his ability to manage intricate logistical and human elements but also solidified his expertise in international project management, turning a potential stumbling block into a significant opportunity for growth and capability enhancement for WIKA India.

The Art of Balance: Leadership and Personal Well-being

In the demanding world of manufacturing leadership, Gaurav places a strong emphasis on achieving a sustainable balance between professional responsibilities and personal well-being.

He views this equilibrium not as a luxury but as a foundation for sustained performance. *“Balancing leadership and personal life begins with setting clear priorities and respecting boundaries,”* he advises.

His personal practice involves a deliberate allocation of time. *“I stay focused on high-impact tasks during work hours and ensure time is reserved for family, travel, and personal development,”* he reveals. These intentional practices, he finds, are crucial for sustaining his energy and clarity of thought. *“These practices bring clarity and energy.”*

For his peers and aspiring leaders, Gaurav offers direct and empathetic guidance: *“For other leaders, I recommend being intentional with time, maintaining perspective beyond work, and recognizing that personal stability directly supports professional performance.”*

This philosophy underscores that true leadership effectiveness is not just about relentless work, but also about the wisdom to foster one's own well-being, thereby enhancing the capacity to lead with sustained impact and vision.

The Relentless Pursuit of Excellence: Strategy to Outcome

What truly fuels Gaurav's drive to continuously push boundaries and achieve excellence in the manufacturing field is a profound satisfaction derived from transforming strategic

intent into tangible results. *“What motivates me is the ability to turn a clear strategy into measurable outcomes,”* he states with conviction.

For Gaurav, progress is the ultimate reward, and every accomplishment, regardless of scale, contributes to this forward momentum. *“Each achievement—whether in business performance, team development, or strategic direction—reinforces progress,”* he explains.

This iterative process, where planning leads to execution and execution generates further impetus, is central to his leadership style. *“That progress, built through planning and disciplined execution, creates momentum.”*

The clear line of sight between daily actions and overarching objectives keeps his focus unwavering. *“Seeing how each step contributes to long-term goals keeps my focus sharp,”* he affirms. This intrinsic motivation, rooted in the alignment of strategic vision and quantifiable impact, is what continually propels Gaurav in his pursuit of manufacturing excellence.

A Global Impact: Vision Meets Disciplined Execution

For aspiring business leaders who harbor ambitions of making a truly global impact, Gaurav offers a single, most important piece of advice: *“Develop a clarity of vision and align it with disciplined execution.”* He emphasizes that merely having grand aspirations is insufficient; they must be underpinned by rigorous implementation.

This means much more than just understanding the end goal. It involves *“understanding your long-term goals clearly,*



For aspiring business leaders seeking to create a global impact, the single most important advice is to develop a clarity of vision and align it with disciplined execution.





What motivates me is the ability to turn a clear strategy into measurable outcomes.



building cross-functional capabilities, and staying adaptable to evolving environments.” The complexities of the global market demand a leader capable of integrating diverse functions and responding swiftly to change.

Gaurav believes that *“True global leadership depends on strategic thinking, consistent delivery, and influencing diverse cultures while remaining grounded in your core values.”* This holistic perspective emphasizes that achieving global reach is not just about market penetration, but also about ethical leadership, cultural intelligence, and an unwavering commitment to principles.

Gaurav’s journey exemplifies this advice as he continues to drive WIKA India’s growth and influence. He is like a beacon for those who aspire to lead manufacturing on an international scale, shaping not just products, but the very future of industry with clarity, discipline, and profound impact.

Impactful Contributions and Acclaimed Recognition

Gaurav Bawa’s profound impact on the manufacturing sector extends beyond his corporate responsibilities. Various prestigious platforms have recognized his insights and leadership. In the past, he has been invited as a **guest speaker** by esteemed organizations such as **VDMA (German Engineering Federation) India**, **Chandigarh University**, and the **IED (Instrumentation Engineers Club) organization**. These engagements underscore his commitment to fostering industry knowledge and inspiring the next generation of leaders.

“My engagements included speaking on inclusion and diversity, aligning engineering education with industry practices, and the role of automation in sustainability,” Gaurav noted. These topics reflect his holistic understanding of modern manufacturing, emphasizing not just technological advancement but also the critical human and environmental dimensions.

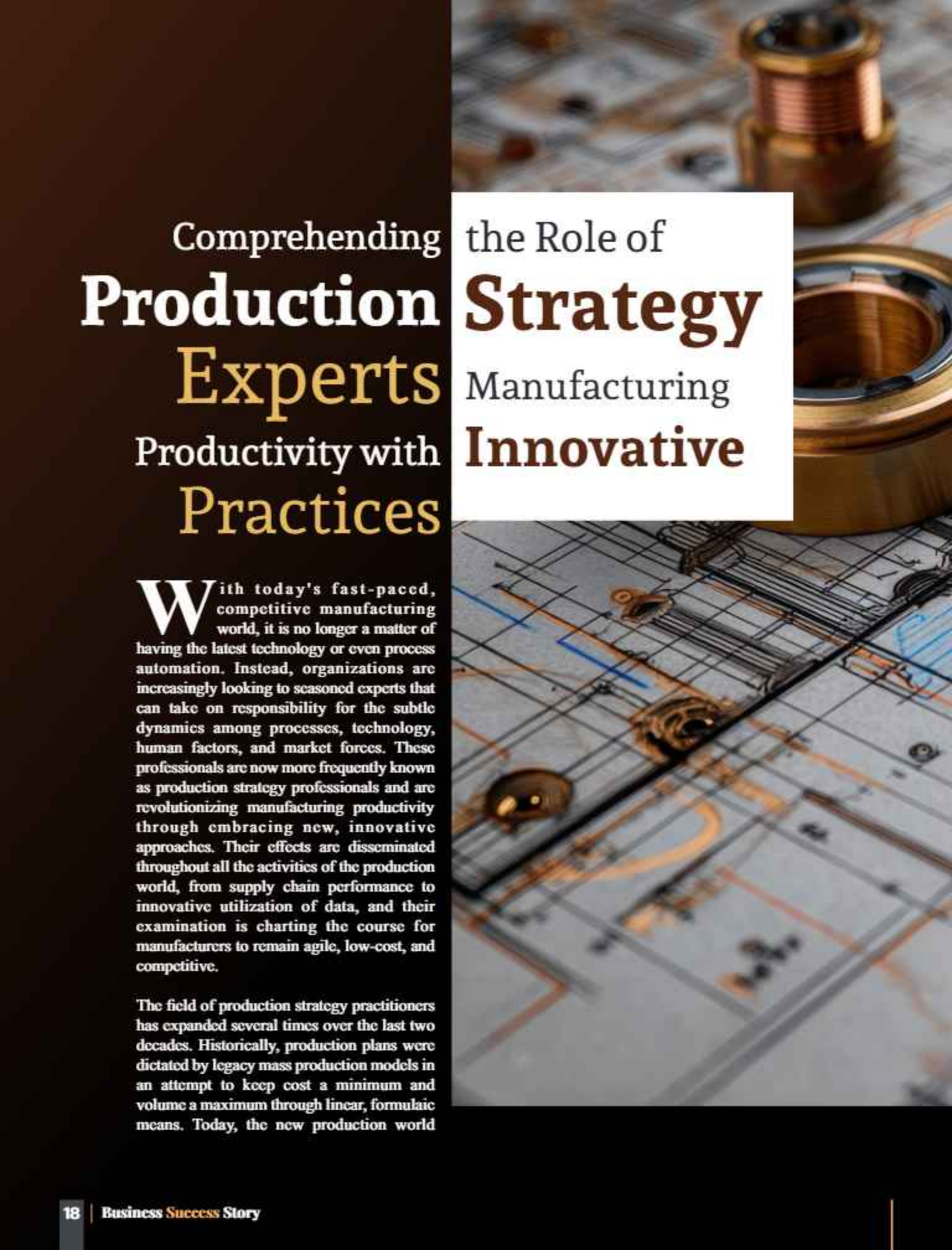
His contributions have not gone unnoticed. In recognition of his significant influence and leadership, Gaurav was named **“Best Leader to Watch for 2024”** by CEO Magazine, a testament to his rising prominence in the business world.

Further cementing his stature, he received the coveted **“CEO of the Year 2024”** award from the **Instrumentation Engineers Club (IEC)**, a leading non-profit organization dedicated to advancing industrial automation in India. This particular accolade, received at the *IEC Annual Awards*, highlights his exceptional leadership within the specialized field of instrumentation, a critical component of modern manufacturing.

Gaurav Bawa believes, *“His awards reflect the hard work and dedication of every member of the WIKA India family. At WIKA India, driving growth, innovation, and continuous improvement are our cultural values, and this recognition is surely evidence of our relentless commitment.”*

These awards are not just personal milestones but also affirmations of WIKA India’s collective pursuit of excellence under Gaurav’s astute guidance. His saga is a testament to the fact that an extraordinary league of leaders is truly leading India’s manufacturing dynamism.





Comprehending the Role of **Production Experts** Productivity with **Practices**

the Role of **Strategy** Manufacturing **Innovative**

With today's fast-paced, competitive manufacturing world, it is no longer a matter of having the latest technology or even process automation. Instead, organizations are increasingly looking to seasoned experts that can take on responsibility for the subtle dynamics among processes, technology, human factors, and market forces. These professionals are now more frequently known as production strategy professionals and are revolutionizing manufacturing productivity through embracing new, innovative approaches. Their effects are disseminated throughout all the activities of the production world, from supply chain performance to innovative utilization of data, and their examination is charting the course for manufacturers to remain agile, low-cost, and competitive.

The field of production strategy practitioners has expanded several times over the last two decades. Historically, production plans were dictated by legacy mass production models in an attempt to keep cost a minimum and volume a maximum through linear, formulaic means. Today, the new production world

requires loads of more reactive and flexible thinking. Changing patterns of consumption, customization frenzy, digital dislocation, and supply chain closures across the globe have all pushed the necessity of rethinking the old ways. The professionals in production strategy possess the strategic as well as technical expertise required to lead the manufacturers on this new journey.

Embedded within the center of their briefs are production strategy strategists who analyze current processes, identify inefficiencies, and create customized strategies that incorporate working procedures and products them into corporate objectives. Beyond their interest in near-term profitability, they strategize for growth in scalable, resilient, and durable long-term settings. Based on their evaluation of internal strengths and weaknesses and external market forces,

they assist organizations in creating production systems that can synchronize with changing conditions without compromising on reliability.

The greatest value added by production strategy practitioners is the combination of lean manufacturing concepts and digital innovation. As lean thinking engulfed waste reduction and value generation to the maximum, the combination of this with Industry 4.0 technologies like the Internet of Things (IoT), data analysis, and artificial intelligence reveals new paradigms for improved productivity. These are at the forefront of developing hybrid solutions that integrate old-school lean process expertise and web expertise to enable more transparent, more efficient, and more effective manufacturing.

Some examples include the deployment of IoT-sensing equipment over the shop floor by production strategy experts to gather real-time information regarding equipment utilization, material utilization, and energy utilization. These numbers are used for identifying trends, predicting maintenance requirements, and allocating resources optimally. These activities minimize unwanted downtime, enhance equipment utilization, and hence enhance output without reducing quality. Fortunately, experts ensure that these kinds of technologies form part of individuals' workflow without issues to facilitate collaboration instead of replacement.

Employees' participation is among the most important areas where production strategy experts have their impact. Factory employees of today should be able to operate machinery yet also able to operate new machinery and processes. Strategy experts are likely to head training programs, develop cross-functional interfaces, and foster a culture for continuous improvement. They tie the intentions of management to the realities of the shop floor by engaging workers in problem-solving and strategic thinking. This alignment produces a more productive workforce, increased control over outcomes, and mutual interest in productivity improvement.

Secondly, there must be production strategy experts who make it possible to tailor and produce modules without sacrificing efficiency. As consumer demand shifts toward products that are custom made, companies must be able to make smaller volumes with higher variety without sacrificing cost management. Strategy gurus lead the way in creating modular design specifications, flexible automation equipment, and intelligent scheduling software that make rapid changeover and flexible manufacturing a reality.

In addition to enabling responsiveness to trends in the market, this capability allows for productivity to be maintained in low-volume, high-mix settings as well.

Supply chain integration is another area where such gurus bring immense value.

Disruption is normal and openness an affluence in the globalized world production networks today. Production strategy specialists collaborate with procurement, logistics, and inventory management personnel to engineer pre-budgeted, interactive supply networks that allow for seamless production. Using advanced high-end planning and simulation software, they can simulate different supply chain alternatives, predict risks, and create contingency strategies for minimization. This is an effective production system that, besides being effective, is also shock-resistant.

Sustainability is also making headway on the agenda of production strategy. As the business priority number one of responsibility and regulation matters, environmental concerns are, and eco-concerns are leading among the issues. Manufacturers thus need to meet their aspiration to minimize their footprint on the environment without sacrificing profitability. Experts also assist in developing carbon footprints of production processes, waste reduction opportunities, energy-saving opportunities, and circular economy implementation. They may, for example, use closed-loop recycling processes or purchase inputs more sustainably, with the advantage of ensuring the improvements do not decrease productivity.

Data is at the forefront of the production strategy professionals' arsenal. Modern plants produce huge quantities of data, but professional technical expertise and strategic know-how are required to transform the data into useful information. Experts use state-of-the-art-level analytics and machine learning techniques to transform production data into insight, identify inefficiencies, and forecast future performance. Whether it's optimizing batch sizes, minimizing cycle times, or ensuring quality control. Their analytics insights inform manufacturers with improved precision and confidence.

With global competition, never has the production strategy professionals' role been more important. They are supposed to drive companies not only to respond but to anticipate and prepare ahead of them. Either embracing smart technologies, creating flexible manufacturing mindsets, or enhancing employees' competences, these professionals are at the center of building factories of the future.

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Understanding the Evolution of the **Smart Factory** Concept and How is It Enhancing the Productivity in the **Industries Today**

The last few years have revolutionized the industry entirely by means of technology innovation and the relentless pursuit of productivity, customization, and velocity. At the heart of this new phenomenon is the smart factory, a new product lifecycle management approach built upon digital technology that supports highly automated, adaptable, and data-driven manufacturing environments. From its conceptual origin during Industry 4.0 to its live implementations in the industries of today's world, the smart factory is an industrial success story that successfully redefines productivity, responsiveness, and sustainability.

Smart factory has been broadly described as highly networked and digitized factory plant based on an integration of cyber-physical systems, Internet of Things (IoT), artificial intelligence (AI), and big data analytics to mechanize and automate production processes. Smart factories differ from conventional factories with standalone and manual processes,





in which machines, humans, and data are combined as a responsive and interactive system. This conversation supports real-time monitoring, advanced predictive maintenance, self-sufficient decision-making, and more responsive production lines. This allows manufacturers to work more efficiently, reduce downtime, and react more quickly to fluctuations in demand.

Smart factory development has been inexorably pulled into the broader development of Industry 4.0, initially a catch-all term for manufacturing industry digitization surfacing in the early 2010s. Focus was initially put on discrete process automation and simple data collection systems. Later, with the progression of time, the newest technology developments such as cloud computing, machine learning, and edge computing facilitated the transition of makers towards end-to-end integrated and smart manufacturing environments away from isolated automation. This is a function of the smart factory new—the living environment where data not only accumulates but also calculated and acted upon in real-time to try to make performance better.

One of the most surprising ways the smart factory increases productivity is with predictive maintenance. Classic paradigms for maintenance used scheduled inspections or fixing after a break has occurred, usually leading to unjustified downtime and manufacturing delays. Intelligent factories, by contrast, apply IoT sensors and algorithms to monitor equipment health round the clock. Through detecting early wear and tear or out-of-norm behavior, the systems can predict when maintenance is required, thus reducing downtime and optimizing equipment life. This shift to predictive to reactive maintenance also improves overall equipment effectiveness (OEE), a key plant productivity metric.

Yet another top driver of productivity within the smart factory is potential mass customization. Since consumption demand so quickly changes and is so strongly customized, producers must remake manufacturing lines quickly and be efficient. Smart factories accomplish this with reconfigurable manufacturing platforms dynamically redesigned and flexible automation. New emerging technologies such as digital twins and AI-tuned process optimization allow product and process improvement modeling and checking new product design or before going live, reducing time-to-market and the quality of the final product.

The smart factory also allows a data culture that allows improved decision-making at all organizational levels in the firm. Through visualisation and real-time capture of data,

managers and operators have actionable information on manufacturing performance, quality information, supply chain performance, and labor productivity. Openness allows operations to be responsive and anticipatory, and issues are felt and responded to at early stages before they turn into monolithic hurdles. Along with all of this, the technology of machine learning is able to recognize patterns and outliers in vast data that are perhaps impossible for a human to even find, which generates long-term growth and innovation.

Human aspects also perform much better due to the incorporation of smart factory concepts. While automation is generally an underlying cause of job displacement, the truth is smart factories do provide some new kinds of jobs for highly skilled people who can operate, service, and manage advanced digital equipment. Augmented reality and virtual reality technology also exist to train employees, guide them through tricky procedures, and remotely assist them. Cobots or collaborative robots are working alongside humans, doing drudgery or risky work so that human workers can do more dignified ones. Human-robot collaboration enhances not just safety but also productivity and employee satisfaction.

Everywhere in the world, the smart factory also enables sustainability and smart use of resources—something much-maligned in today's era of industrialism. Smart energy management systems track and control energy consumption in real-time, reducing waste and environmental impacts.



Advanced analytics will identify areas of water and raw material inefficiency, emissions, enabling manufacturers to meet regulations and corporate sustainability goals. Striking a balance between productivity innovation needs and environmental responsibility, intelligent factories are building a path toward a more sustainable future of production.

Existing manufacturing industries such as the automotive, electronics, pharma, and consumer goods industry are embracing the idea of a smart factory in order to be competitive within a more globalized and rapidly changing marketplace. In the automotive industry, for example, companies are leveraging smart manufacturing technology to make more sophisticated vehicles with higher levels of customization, without sacrificing time to market and levels of quality. In the pharmaceutical sector, intelligent factories facilitate real-time monitoring of manufacturing conditions to guarantee regulatory compliance and product safety.

The smart factory will continue to change into increasingly complicated and interconnected form with the arrival of technologies like 5G, blockchain, quantum computing, and autonomous systems. The technologies will continue to improve manufacturing processes as more agile, scalable, and robust. With digital disruption under full gallop, those companies that place an early wager on smart factory technology will be best positioned to ride disruption, innovate at pace, and deliver value to customers.

In creating the real world, the smart factory is a revolution of innovation for the manufacturing mindset. With the next generation technologies creating integrated, intelligent, and information-based settings, smart factories are creating productivity, flexibility, and sustainability to revolutionary levels. With the concept still evolving and expanding, it can revolutionize the industrial sector and usher in a new era of smart manufacturing.



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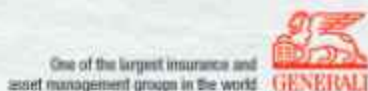
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